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Written statement* submitted by the Iranian Elite Research Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Sanctions on Iran: A Violation of Rights of the Child

Introduction

The further tightening of sanctions on the Islamic of Republic of Iran by the United States and the European Union since 2011, has deteriorated the medical situation in the country. The negative impact of sanctions in supplying medicines and medical treatment for patients' violates the basic rights of the Iranian people. Sanctioning the banking system has impeded the money transaction process on the international level and thus prevented companies and governmental organizations from purchasing medical products for patients in need. This action has indirectly affected the healthcare system of the country through creating a shortage of medical equipments and supplies. The impacts have affected not only patients with critical conditions but those of all age groups. Amongst all, children are known to be the most vulnerable and thus prioritized group in medical emergencies. The Iranian Elite Research Center (IREC), a non-governmental research center, is alarmed by the impact of sanctions on the health situation and medical treatment process of child patients. IREC hereby demands the necessary measures to lift the inhumane sanctions imposed on Iran, in an attempt to defend the rights of children in need for medical aid under the Human Rights charter of the United Nations.

Overview

The Islamic Republic of Iran has long been under the unilateral sanctions of the United States of American ever since the 1979 revolution. Therefore, the country had built its infrastructure based on domestic and foreign production and trade with other countries. The intensification of sanctions gained momentum in 2006 as the US urged a multilateral sanctions on the country. With the daily increasing number of sanctions and countries participating in it, different vulnerable institutions such as the medical system of Iran began to feel the pressure. One of its impacts is the medical shortage caused for child patients in critical need. A consequence which violates many charters of the United Nations:

- Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which stresses "Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily" has been violated by the sanctions as it prevents the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in fulfilling its duty of providing medical supplies through trade and import; a need for critical child patients to survive and develop healthily.

- Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child declares that children have the right to the best health care possible; a right which has been infringed as it has led to the lack of access to basic medical supplies, let alone the "best health care".

- Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approves that "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." The sanctions had degraded the value of the Iranian currency and thus created inflation. The result of the inflation is decreasing the purchase power of Iranian families and those with lower income. Consequently, children living in low income families will be affected by inflation and becomes more venerable than before in funding its medical needs in case of need. Since Iran is a country whose budget heavily depends on the export of oil money, the state's power too will weaken in supporting the low income families; a violation of the rights of Iranian families and children.

- Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that every person has "the right to life, liberty and security of person". The right to life has been infringed by countries sanctioning Iranian banks and transaction of money for medical needs. Such a violation limits the right to liberty and security of the ill child as well.

Sanctions, Medical Shortages and Child Patients

In 2013, IREC reported on the effects of sanctions on the Iranian people and its violation of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being". IREC has at this point collected statistics and information on the medical shortages which have impacted the lives of child patients

suffering from: Asthma, Cancer, Hemophilia and Thalassemia. The data which has been gathered through direct interviews with doctors, patients, medical institutions, charity groups and non-governmental organizations asserted the scarcity of vital medical treatments for patients in critical conditions which has resulted in:

- The death of over 100 Thalassemia children in the past year and a half due to the lack of medical supplies resulting from the sanctions.
- The death of a number of Hemophilia child victims due to the lack of medical supplies resulting from the sanctions.
- The shortage of medicines used to overcome iron overload in Thalassemia children such as Desferal, Desfonac and Deferasirox.
- The import of antibiotics from China and India with unknown substances which resulted in serious gastrointestinal side-effects such as vomiting and diarrhea in Children suffering from Asthma.
- The side-effects of iron overload which has led to diabetes and kidney and heart failures.
- The resource to old treatment methods which were conducted around two decades ago and cause pains and side-effects with less chance of rehabilitation.
- The interruption of strategic treatment processes.
- Long-term side-effects of inconsistent treatment due to medical shortage such as joint aches in Hemophilia children.
- Shortage of Radiopharmaceuticals in need for Hemophilia children.

Recommendations

As the situation of children in need of medical supplies deteriorates day by day, the number of critical patients increases as well. This limitation of access and isolation not only damages the health system, but other institutions which provide social benefits and services for the Iranian people. In a globalized world where all countries are interdependent, sanctioning the economy of a country means sanctioning many other rights of the people of that country. As the Iranian economy is heavily dependent on oil exports and so it fuels the country's budget for providing the basic infrastructure for international trade and security. Since the basic rights of Iranian children has been directly violated by the sanctions according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; it prevents the government from implementing medical aid, treatment and measures to assure the healthy survival and development of Iranian children, especially that of the "best" type of health care as mentioned in article 24 of the convention.

Herby the Iranian Elite Research Center recommends the Human Rights Council on:

- Identifying sanctions as a violator of human rights when it impacts non-state actors and vulnerable population of society such as children and the ill.
- Adopting and implementing legislation to abolish sanctions as an inhuman and non-intelligent punishment which targets innocent people rather than governments.